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Cape Verde
Post Report

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Cover: *Sachuo*, the 32-foot Embassy sailboat, which can be used for interisland sails and day and weekend trips.

Preface

An assignment to Cape Verde offers an opportunity to live and work in a vigorous 10-year-old nation struggling to develop 10 disparate islands, with few national resources outside the dedication and hard work of its people. The climate is mild and dry, the people interesting and friendly, and one has unlimited access to the sea, beautiful beaches, and related water sports. It is a post for self-starters who welcome the challenges of isolation and reliance on their own resources.

This is the official post report prepared by the post. The information contained herein is directed to official U.S. Government employees and their families. Any other information concerning the facts as set forth herein is to be regarded as unofficial information.

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The Host Country

Area, Geography, and Climate

The Cape Verde Islands are located in the central Atlantic Ocean 620 kilometers (385 miles due west of Senegal) off the west coast of Africa. The archipelago consists of 10 islands and 5 islets, divided into windward and leeward groups. The six islands in the windward group are Santo Antao, Sao Vicente, Santa Luzia, Sao Nicolau, Sal, and Boa Vista. The four islands in the leeward group are Maio, Santiago, Fogo, and Brava. Of the 10 islands, all but Santa Luzia are inhabited. The capital city of Praia is on Santiago.

Although the islands are volcanic in origin, the only active crater is on Fogo; its most recent eruption was in 1951. In March 1981, the crater showed activity, and seismic tremors occurred on the nearby island of Brava. Three islands—Sal, Boa Vista, and Maio—are level and lack natural water supplies. Mountains higher than 1,280 meters (4,200 feet) are found on the islands of Santiago, Fogo, Santo Antao, and Sao Nicolau.

Temperatures and humidity vary with altitude, but the climate is warm, dry, and windy. The average temperature in Praia is 75°F (24.4°C). The hottest month, September, has an average temperature of 79°F (26°C); the coolest month, February, averages 72°F (22.2°C). The ocean stabilizes temperatures.

All of the islands, but especially the windward, have been eroded by sand carried by high winds. On several of the mountainous islands, sheer, jagged cliffs rise from the sea. The uplands and coasts have no natural vegetation; most vegetation is in the interior valleys.

The Cape Verde Islands have only two seasons—a dry season (November–July) and a rainy season (August–October). Insufficient rainfall has led to drought conditions on the islands for more than 15 years. In Praia, the average annual precipitation is only about 9.5 inches. The dry season is marked by gusting winds. Dust, originating in the distant Sahara desert, reduces visibility, damages machines, and irritates eyes and respiratory passages. The dry climate discourages mosquitoes and most insect pests, but some thrive despite the drought and wind.

Population

Cape Verdean culture reflects the long history as part of the Portuguese empire. Portuguese navigators discovered the uninhabited archipelago in the mid-15th century. African slaves were brought to the islands to work on Portuguese plantations, and the Cape Verdeans are of mixed African and Portuguese origin. Vestiges of African culture are most pronounced on the island of Santiago.

The islands have few natural resources and for years Cape Verdeans have emigrated in order to survive. Sizable Cape Verdean communities are in the U.S. (mainly in New England), Senegal, The Netherlands, Portugal, Argentina, Brazil, Guinea-Bissau, and Angola.

Although the official language is Portuguese, most Cape Verdeans speak Crioulo, a mixture of Portuguese and African languages. The predominant religion is Roman Catholicism but the Church of the Nazarene and the Seventh-day Adventists are also represented.

The 1980 census of the islands reported a population of 296,000 which had grown to more than 310,000 by 1985. Population density is 74.2 per square mile. Praia, the capital and largest urban area, has about 50,000 residents. The commercial center, Mindelo, on Sao Vicente, has 45,000 inhabitants and is the second largest urban area. Nearly half of Cape Verde's population lives on the island of Santiago. Santo Antao, Sao Vicente, and Fogo contain most of the remainder.

In 1462, Portuguese settlers arrived at Santiago and founded Ribeira Grande—the first European city in the tropics. In the 16th century the archipelago prospered from the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Pirates occasionally attacked the Portuguese settlements. Ribeira Grande was sacked by Sir Francis Drake in 1585. After a French attack in 1712, the city declined in importance relative to Praia, which became the capital in 1770.

The archipelago has experienced recurrent drought and famine since the end of the 18th century, and with the decline in the slave trade its fragile prosperity slowly vanished. The islands' position astride Atlantic shipping lanes made Cape Verde an ideal location for resupplying ships, and the excellent harbor at Mindelo on Sao Vicente became an important commercial center. In the first half of the 19th century, it was the headquarters of the U.S. Navy Africa Squadron. As early as 1810, U.S. whaling ships recruited crews from Brava and Fogo to hunt the whales abundant in the waters near Cape Verde.

The first American Consulate in Cape Verde was established in 1816, and U.S. consular representation in the archipelago continued throughout the 19th century. A submarine cable station was established at Mindelo in 1875, but was later moved to Sal.

In 1951, Cape Verde's status was changed from a Portuguese colony to an overseas province. In 1956, the clandestine African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde (PAIGC) was organized in Bissau under the leadership of Amilcar Cabral, a Cape Verdean.

The PAIGC sought to make demands of the Portuguese authorities to improve economic, social, and political conditions in Cape Verde and then-Portuguese Guinea.

The PAIGC's armed struggle against Portugal began in 1961 with acts of sabotage and eventually grew into a war in Portuguese Guinea that pitted 10,000 PAIGC soldiers, supported by the Soviet bloc, against 35,000 Portuguese and African troops fighting for Portugal. Although the PAIGC had a clandestine organization in Cape Verde, it did not attempt to disrupt Portuguese control of the archipelago. The PAIGC became an overt political movement in Cape Verde after the Portuguese revolution of April 1974.

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On December 18, 1974, Portugal and the PAIGC signed an agreement in Lisbon providing for a transitional government composed of Portuguese and Cape Verdean officials who would prepare Cape Verde for independence. On June 30, 1975, Cape Verdeans elected a National Assembly, which received the instruments of independence from Portugal on July 5, 1975.

After a political coup in Guinea-Bissau on November 14, 1980, Cape Verde abandoned its hope for unity with that country and formed a separate political party, the African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde (PAICV). Since then Cape Verde's relations with Guinea-Bissau have been as one sovereign state to another.

Public Institutions

Government organization is based on the constitution approved in 1980 and promulgated in 1981. The constitution declares that the PAICV is the "supreme expression of the interests of the popular masses" and designates the National Assembly as the supreme organ of state. Elections to the National Assembly are for 5-year terms; the last two were held in 1980 and 1985. The Assembly selects the President who, as head of state, proposes the Prime Minister to the Assembly. The Prime Minister, as head of government, proposes other ministers and senior officials to the Assembly. Government ministers are in most cases senior members of the PAICV. The PAICV is the only authorized political party.

The judicial system is comprised of a Supreme Court whose members are appointed by the goverment, regional courts, and local popular courts. Separate courts hear civil and criminal cases. Appeal to the Supreme Court is possible.

Cape Verde is divided into districts or "conselhos." In each district a government delegate or "delegado," appointed by the central government, is responsible for local administration and operation. There is also a parallel PAICV organization.

The women's branch of the PAICV, the OMCV, is active on all the islands, as is the youth organization, the JAAC-CV. The Cape Verdean Red Cross, "Cruz Vermelha," is an important charitable organization, and the Institute of Solidarity plays an important role in channeling nongovernmental aid.

Arts, Science, and Education

Since the discovery and settlement of the islands, the intellectual, technological, and artistic trends have often followed those of Portugal. The country's education system consists of various tiers. A semiautonomous kindergarten network exists for children 4–6.

Elementary education is organized in two cycles for children aged 7 to 9 and 11 to 12. Secondary education is available in two high schools located in Praia and Mindelo or in programs for technical and commercial studies.

The adult literacy rate in Cape Verde is about 40%. Because of this low level, the Cape Verde authorities have assigned a high priority to raising basic educational standards. School overcrowding and low levels of instruction continue to plague these efforts, although significant improvements have been achieved. As there is no university in Cape Verde, students have traditionally gone abroad to pursue university and technical studies.

Cape Verde has a rich tradition of Crioulo literature, music and poetry. A national artisan center in Mindelo is attempting to re-introduce native crafts, including weaving and pottery making. A small ethnological museum is maintained there.

Panos, handwoven cloth from Cape Verde, that were famous during the slave trading days and used as a form of money, are still made by a small number of artisans and are worn by women around their waists.

Commerce and Industry

Most of Cape Verde's work force is employed in the rural sector, with unemployment approaching 50%.

Cape Verde's dearth of material resources, aggravated by 15 consecutive years of drought conditions, has resulted in agricultural production consistently falling far below consumption needs. Mineral resources are salt, pozzolana (a volcanic rock used in cement production), limestone, and kaolin.

About 100,000 people farm or work in agricultural production. Subsistence crops—bananas, corn, beans, sweet potatoes, and manioc—occupy most of the arable land. During the present drought, Cape Verde has produced only a small proportion of its dietary staple, corn. In years of adequate rainfall, small quantities of bananas, sugarcane, and arabica coffee are exported. Livestock production includes goats, chickens, pigs and, in fewer numbers, beef cows. Goats are especially adapted to the rocky terrain and provide a vitally needed source of protein.

The plentiful fish in the archipelago's seas provide local fish consumption, small quantities of fish and shellfish for export, and 2,000 jobs. Cape Verde has cold storage and freezing facilities and processing plants at Mindelo, Praia, and on Sal Island. The government is examining ways to further develop its fishing industry.

Cape Verde's strategic location at the crossroads of central Atlantic air and sealanes has been enhanced by improvements at Mindelo's harbor (Porto Grande) and at Sal's international airport.

Ship repair facilities at Mindelo were opened in 1983. The islands location and climate offer possibilities for the development of tourism. The basic infrastructure for tourism on Sal was improved in 1983 with the completion of the U.S.-financed desalination and power plant.

Because of the islands meager resources, many Cape Verdeans seek work abroad. Worker remittances are estimated at $20 million a year.

In June of 1985 Cape Verde signed an Overseas Private Investment Corporation agreement with the U.S. Cape Verde has economic accords with Portugal, the European Economic Community, the Arab Development Bank, Sweden, The Netherlands, and the African Development Bank. Since Cape Verde's independence, the United States has provided grant aid for food, technical assistance, soil and water conservation, rural development, school construction, and training and desalination facilities.

Retail trade within the islands is handled by numerous small shopkeepers and market traders. Food is the largest imported item, and with few exceptions, all consumer items are imported.

The National Union of Cape Verdean Workers (UNTC) is comprised of the membership of six trade unions (civil construction, transport, telecommunications, etc.). While the unions are guaranteed the right to strike, they do not do so. They are not strong, with only a few thousand members, and are closely tied to the party structure.

Transportation

Automobiles

Personnel assigned to Praia should bring a private car for transportation about town and to the beaches and mountain villages. The post has no official vehicles for personal use but the Embassy usually can arrange cars for TDY or weekend use until personal vehicles arrive.

Traffic moves on the right. Narrow roads, people on foot, and wandering livestock make driving somewhat hazardous.

Cars brought into Cape Verde by nonresidents are considered in transit, and no taxes are levied. However, a second car is subject to all duties and taxes.

European and Japanese makes are the most popular, including Fiat, VW, Renault, Leyland, Datsun, Peugeot, Toyota, and Volvo. American cars are rarely seen, as servicing is difficult. If you import a car, bring common spare parts such as spark plugs, points, condenser, fan belts, etc. A heavy-duty battery is essential, and air-conditioning, while not essential, is nice to have during the warmer months.

Rough cobblestone roads cause tires and suspension systems to wear rapidly. Rust is a severe problem due to ocean breezes. Any vehicle shipped to Cape Verde should have heavy-duty suspension, radial tires, and undercoating. Adjust carburetor for low-octane leaded gas, since locally available gasoline is of lower octane than American brands. A good supply of car wax should be sent with consumables.

It is unwise to ship car radios and stereos with the car.

Local

Public transportation in Praia is inadequate. A few taxis (black and green) are available but not at all hours. Fare from the Embassy to Prainha (where most Americans live) is about 80 escudos. Bus service is available but no set schedules exist. Most bus rides cost 10 escudos.

Public transport to the interior towns is by bus and small passenger trucks. Round trips can be made for less than 100 escudos. All the island's major towns are connected by cobblestone roads.

Regional

The larger islands of Santiago, Sal, Sao Vicente, Sao Nicolau, Santo Antao, Boa Vista, Maio, and Fogo are served by TACV (Transportes Aereos de Cabo Verde), the national airline. TACV flies small Hawker-Siddeley and De Havilland aircraft several times weekly between major islands at reasonable prices. Small, regularly scheduled shipping/passenger vessels link Brava (the only inhabited island without an airport) to Fogo and Santiago. Ferry boats also travel regularly between Sao Vicente and Santo Antao. There are no railroads on the islands. All islands have similar cobblestone road systems.

Praia's 5th of July Park.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Cape Verde's internal telephone and telegraph system is extremely limited. Local telephone calls in Praia cost less than 5 cents and connections are good, but few people have personal phones. With the exception of the Ambassador's residence, there are no telephones in the homes of U.S. Government personnel. Phone calls can be made from the Embassy, or from one of the nearby hotels.

Phone connections between islands are less reliable and sometimes service is out for extended periods. You can send telegrams to any island from Praia.

External communication links are good. Overseas telephone calls from Praia are sent to Lisbon, where calls enter the international system. A new communication satellite system with added lines and modern switchboard equipment is being installed in Praia and Mindelo which should improve all communication services.

Telephone charges for calls from Cape Verde to the U.S. are about U.S.$4 per minute.

Mail and Pouch

The weekly pouch for Washington closes on Thursday afternoon. Transit times average 10–12 days. Incoming pouches average one a week. Praia has no APO service. Use the following pouch address for all first-class mail:

Full Name
Praia (DOS)
Washington, D.C. 20520

For all periodicals, publications, and packages over 2 pounds use ZIP Code 20521.

The Department of State now sends all official and personal mail to Praia via air pouch, including magazines, newspapers, packages, etc.

Transit time and price of sending letters by international mail are about the same as that for pouch mail. Send packages to Praia via pouch rather than international mail. The international mail address is:

Full Name
American Embassy
C.P. 201
Praia, Cape Verde

Radio and TV

Praia's single local radio station broadcasts on FM only. Programs concentrate on popular music and local news. International news coverage is incomplete. Broadcast hours are 6:30 am–8 am, 12:15–2:15 pm, and 6 pm to midnight. Shortwave broadcasts from Europe, North America, and Africa can be heard with proper radios. Radios sold locally exceed prices of those sold in the U.S.

Cape Verdean television (TEVC) is in color and transmits four evenings a week from 8 pm to midnight. Programing consists of news, sports, cartoons, cultural programs, and weekly movies from the U.S., Europe, and the Soviet Union with Portuguese subtitles.

The SECAM D.K. system is not compatible with the American system. U.S. sets can be converted, although they suffer in quality. If buying new, get a 5-system TV set. With a booster and a large antenna, TV reception is possible from Dakar and the Canary Islands.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

The regional medical officer stationed in Dakar has responsibility for Praia and six other posts. The doctor visits Praia about once every 3 months. The Embassy keeps a small stock of medical supplies on hand in the Medical Unit. General medical services are available at the government-operated central hospital, but this 300-bed facility falls far below U.S. standards. In addition to the Cape Verdean staff and doctors, there are medical personnel from France, Brazil, Cuba, Russia, and China. A new 140-bed hospital has recently opened in Mindelo.

Some specialists, such as dentists, ophthalmologists, etc., practice in Praia but they are hindered by inadequate training, backup facilities, and supplies. Medical problems are referred to the regional doctor in Dakar for consultation. Complex medical situations are handled in Dakar, Lisbon, or in some cases, the U.S.

Although a priority of the Cape Verdean Government is to increase the quality of health care, it remains inadequate by U.S. standards.

There are no specialized facilities for handicapped dependents.

Americans (U.S. Government employees, tourists, merchant seamen, etc.) have been treated successfully here on an emergency basis.

If you wear eyeglasses bring an extra pair of both regular and sunglasses. If you wear contact lenses be sure to bring a good supply of cleaning and soaking products as they are not available in Praia. Neither eyeglasses nor contact lenses are made in Praia.

Community Health

Community health in Praia is relatively good compared to other West African countries but well below U.S. standards. Praia has daily garbage collection. City water is obtained from springs and is filtered. The Embassy Health Unit recommends boiling and filtering drinking water. Fresh fruits and vegetables are best soaked in an iodine solution if they cannot be peeled before eating raw. Iodine is provided by the Embassy.

There is no city sewage system; all Embassy houses are on septic tanks. During drought conditions, flies and cockroaches flourish and can be annoying.

Preventive Measures

Personnel traveling to Praia should have inoculations against typhoid, yellow fever, typhus, hepatitis, and tetanus. Keep gamma globulin injections current. Malaria suppressants are recommended for those people who travel often to Senegal and other West African countries. Boil and filter water, clean and soak fresh fruits and vegetables, and cook local meats, especially pork, well.

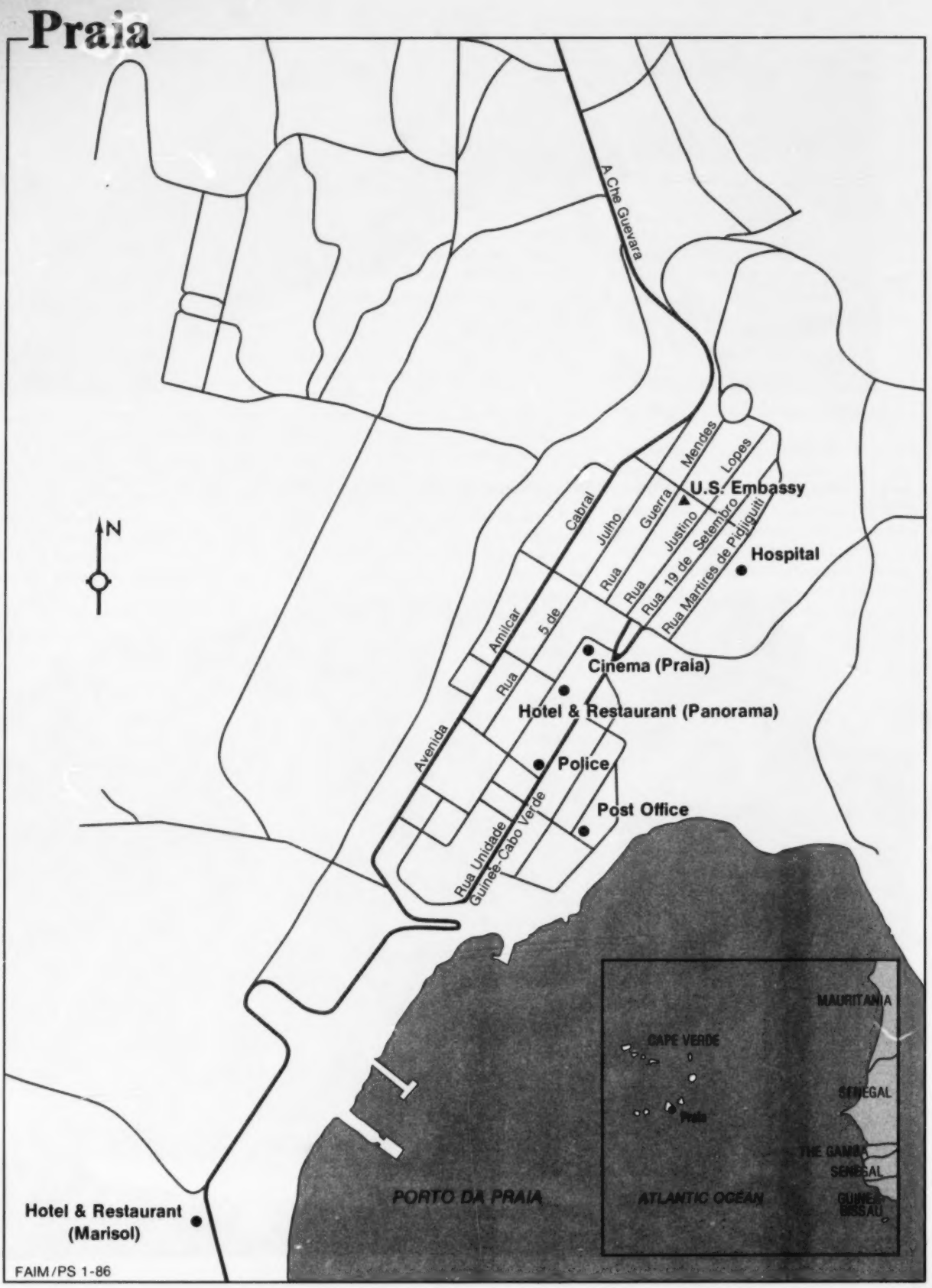
Bring a good supply of strong sun block, as well as skin creams of all kinds, eye drops, and common first aid medications to post. This is especially important as the sun is intense 6 months of the year, and the sandstorms blowing from the Sahara can cause eye and throat irritations.

Employment for Spouses and Dependents

Currently, all spouses who wish to be are employed within the Mission either part- or full-time in PIT positions or on contract. Short-term contracts sometimes arise (6 weeks or less) for spouses who do not want full-time work. The post has a dependent hiring committee through which jobs are processed and rates of pay are established. Spouses are advised to come with a completed Personal Qualifications Statement (Standard Form 171). The post makes every effort to hire dependents who wish to work.

Local employment opportunities are rare, as local unemployment is very high—nearly 50% in some areas. Salaries for any local job would be well below U.S. levels and would require a good command of Portuguese. Occasionally, employment is possible with international organizations such as UNDP. Most jobs are of a clerical nature. However, people with specialized skills such as medical workers or word processing are always in demand.

Above: Quabra Canela—a popular beach near the American housing area. Below: Sailing in the Praia harbor.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Hotel & Restaurant (Panorama)
Avenida
Police
Post Office
Rua Unidade Guinée-Cabo Verde
MAURITANIA
CAPE VERDE
SENEGAL
Praia
THE GAMBIA
SENEGAL
PORTO DA PRAIA
ATLANTIC OCEAN
GUINEA-BISSAU
Hotel & Restaurant (Marisol)
FAIM/PS 1-86

American Embassy

Praia

Praia, a town of 50,000 on the island of Santiago, is the capital of the Republic of Cape Verde. It is the largest town on the island and also serves as the port of Santiago. The largest employer in Praia is the Cape Verdean Government.

The charm of Praia lies in its unique character; it is neither fully African nor European. It retains some of the atmosphere of a small, 19th century town in southern Europe, combined with the people, food, and traditions of West Africa.

While far from a modern European city, Praia is growing rapidly. There are noticeable positive gains in the public works sector and the private sector. Businesses are attempting to modernize and new housing is going up rapidly, although the housing shortage remains acute.

The Post and Its Administration

The first American resident Ambassador in Cape Verde was assigned to Praia in April 1983. In addition to the Ambassador, Embassy personnel include a consular officer, an administrative officer, a communications officer, and a secretary.

The USAID office, which opened in Praia in 1977, consists of an AID representative, two direct-hire officers, and a secretary as well as personnel for two technical assistance contracts. AID's main activity is in the field of agriculture with projects in watershed development and food crop research. The U.S. Government also provides food aid to Cape Verde under the PL–480 program.

Embassy and USAID offices are adjacent to each other on Rua Hoji-Ya-Henda. The joint telephone numbers are 761 and 553.

Personnel arriving at Praia Airport normally will be met. If not, telephone the Embassy or take a taxi to the Embassy (a 5-minute drive).

Embassy hours are Monday to Friday, 8 am–12:30 pm and 2 pm–5:30 pm.

Housing

Temporary Quarters

Embassy personnel are occasionally housed in hotels until their quarters are ready. The Hotel Praia-Mar, located in Prainha on a point overlooking the sea, has 75 rooms, a tennis court, bar, restaurant, and pool. Single rooms are about $30/with air-conditioning and hot water per night. Meals with drinks are about $4.

USAID contract personnel's housing depends on the terms of the individual contracts. There is also a furnished apartment kept available for temporary duty personnel.

Permanent Housing

In addition to the Ambassador's residence, the Embassy leases five small houses and four small apartments in Prainha near the beach. Six of the units have three bedrooms, living/dining room, and two or two-and-a-half baths as well as adequate storage space. The remaining two have two bedrooms, living/dining room, one-and-a-half baths, and a small storage area.

The Ambassador's residence has three bedrooms, backyard patio area, and a small living room and dining room for representation purposes. The Embassy is seeking better housing and as more units become available, housing will be upgraded. Local guards are assigned to all residential properties.

A housing board with representatives from the Embassy and USAID assigns housing but generally new personnel are assigned the house of their predecessor. The wait for housing is usually short.

Furnishings

Quarters are furnished with major appliances (stove, refrigerator, freezer, washer and dryer) and sets of living room, dining room and bedroom furniture. Lamps, bedspreads, and pillows and some porch furniture are also supplied. The post provides a drapery allowance of $500 for each new arrival. Curtains are best ordered from the U.S. after arrival at post. Selection in Praia is limited and inadequate. Curtains should be washable in a regular-sized washing machine.

Bring small decorative and colorful items like pictures, rugs, knick knacks, etc., to personalize quarters. Keep in mind the dust problems and the need for easy cleaning.

The Embassy provides a Welcome Kit consisting of towels, linens, pots and pans, dishes, glassware, etc., which is adequate for a brief time.

Utilities and Equipment

Housing for American employees has hot and cold running water. Electric power is 220v, 50 cycle. Voltage may fluctuate as much as 20%. Transformers are provided when necessary for all major appliances provided by the Embassy. You should bring extra transformers for small personal appliances such as hair dryers, stereos, etc. You might want to consider a voltage regulator for sensitive equipment.

Bring battery-operated clocks. All housing units have air-conditioners, water filters, and vacuum cleaners in addition to the major appliances listed above. Cooking gas is available locally and supplied by the Embassy. A central generator hooked up to all housing units in Prainha provides power in the rare case of an outage.

Each housing unit has its own water storage system. Embassy water truck delivery has almost eliminated prolonged water shortages. Water pressure is not great but showers are adequate and each house has a tub.

U.S. Embassy, Praia. AID offices are located in building to the left.

Food

The selection of fresh food in Cape Verde is limited. Prices of imported goods are high by U.S. standards. Local fish is good and several types are available, including tuna, becuda, and grouper. Lobster is available in season at reasonable prices and fresh meats (beef, pork, and chicken) can be found at local markets.

Papayas, mangoes, and bananas are readily available. The U.S.-sponsored agricultural programs have been responsible for an increase in the variety of vegetables on the market. Potatoes, carrots, squash, cucumbers, onions, green peppers, tomatoes, green beans, and lettuce along with the local staples of dried beans and manioc are available. Many Embassy employees have mini-gardens and grow their own vegetables.

There are a few local "supermarkets" where a wide variety of imported foodstuffs and household products can be purchased.

Fresh dairy products are almost nonexistent. Powdered milk is available in both whole and skim, but ship your own if you have a favorite brand. Margarine and butter is available only in tins.

The level of stocks in the stores fluctuates and residents learn to buy items as they become available. Employees assigned to Praia should use their consumable allowance to ship a wide selection of canned fruits and vegetables in addition to dry goods, paper products, plastic wrap and bags, cleaning and laundry supplies (cold water detergents), and favorite foodstuffs.

Staples such as sugar, flour, yeast, soda, and baking powder can be bought locally but those who like to bake are advised to ship preferred staples, along with specific items such as cooking chocolate, chocolate chips, brown sugar, nuts, cake mixes, syrups, etc., to add variety to menus.

Baby food is expensive and not readily available. If necessary a food processor or blender should be brought to make baby food at home, and a good supply should be ordered with consumable shipments.

Portuguese beer and wines are reasonably priced, and the Embassy periodically places joint orders for consumables with well-known European suppliers. Soft drinks are expensive and should be shipped from the U.S. Diet drinks are not available. Ice tea and lemonade mixes are a good addition to a consumable shipment.

Praia has no commissary, PX, or U.S. Government cafeteria.

Clothing

Dress in Cape Verde follows Western patterns and is less formal than Washington, D.C. In general, clothing suitable for tropical or subtropical climates is appropriate, but warm sweaters and jackets are sometimes necessary in the cool season.

Avoid bringing clothes that require drycleaning as those facilities do not exist in Praia. Wash-and-wear items are the easiest to maintain. Dust and dirt make frequent washing necessary. It would be wise to have a supply of garment bags to provide extra protection for stored clothes.

Simple clothing can be made cheaply by local tailors but the fabric and necessary sewing notions should be brought with you. All-cotton or a mixture of cotton and synthetic fabrics are preferred.

Office attire for both men and women follows a similar standard to that of the Department of State in the summer months.

Men. Casual dress for men is slacks and sports shirts; coats and ties are worn on more formal occasions. Cotton bush shirts are popular for work and social occasions. A dark suit is worn for formal occasions. Dinner jackets, tuxedos, tails, etc., are never worn.

Women. Women generally find lightweight slacks, skirts, blouses, sun dresses, etc., comfortable for everyday wear. Luncheon and cocktail dresses are suitable for more formal occasions. Long dresses are rarely worn.

Children. American-style clothing (jeans and T-shirts) is popular and appropriate, especially with the island youth. Clothing for children should be like that worn by children in the Washington, D.C. area in the summer.

Sports clothing, including a good supply of beachwear (bathing suits, beach shoes, goggles, fins, masks, beach towels, etc.), tennis clothes and shoes, hiking clothes and shoes, should be brought. Sports clothes and equipment of all kinds are expensive locally, and the selection is limited.

The constant sun and wind in Praia makes some sort of hat or head scarf a necessity at times and women find culottes are more practical for daytime wear than wrap-around skirts.

Praia's picturesque cobblestone streets and sidewalks are slippery, so bring crepe-soled shoes for walking and marketing. Bring a good supply of shoes for all members of your family as local selection is limited and sizes vary.

If you sew, knit, or crochet, bring fabric and yarn with you; they are often unavailable locally. Good African cloth can be purchased in Dakar.

Supplies and Services

Supplies

A limited selection of European toiletries, cosmetics, and other sundries is available but American brands are not stocked. Bring your own supply of shampoo, toothpaste, drugs, vitamins, insect repellent, face creams, and sunscreens. Favorite cleaning products should be sent as part of your consumable allowance. A small tool kit, hammer, nails, screwdriver, multi-purpose glues, etc., will be useful.

For those planning small gardens, bring seeds and basic tools. Also ship a healthy supply of hobby materials, sewing notions, playing cards, and favorite games. Bathroom and closet accessories (shower curtains, hooks, rugs, hangers, etc.) should also be brought.

Basic Services

Be prepared to do things for yourself to a greater extent than in a more developed country. No drycleaning or laundry services are available in Praia. Shoe repair, barbers, and basic hairdressing services are available. Radio and auto repair is not reliable and most often handled through the Embassy. The Embassy also handles maintenance of residences.

Domestic Help

As in most West African countries, it is customary to hire domestic help. A full-time maid or cook receives at least 4,000 escudos a month (about $50). Drivers earn about 6,000 escudos monthly. Government regulations set minimum pay scales and require 2 months severance pay on separation. No requirements for pension, social security, or retirement payments exist.

All household help should have a medical exam.

Religious Activities

Cape Verde is predominantly Roman Catholic. Catholic churches are found in most towns. The Seventh-day Adventists and Church of the Nazarene have churches in Praia and are represented on all the islands. All services are in Portuguese or the local Creole.

Education

Dependent Education

At Post. In most cases the local education system in Praia would not be suitable for American dependents.

No international or American school is located here. The Cape Verdean education system has primary and secondary schools only. Postsecondary education is not offered except in religion. Both the primary and secondary schools are crowded and have three different shifts a day to accommodate the number of students. Instruction is in Portuguese. No athletic facilities are available.

The school calendar runs from October to June. Tuition is about $80 a year for primary students and $120 for secondary school. Overall facilities are limited compared with the U.S.

Some European children are studying at post via correspondence courses from France. Employees with primary school aged dependents could consider using a correspondence course such as the Calvert School (Tuscany Road, Baltimore, MD 21210) which is designed to teach children at home. It offers a complete curriculum for kindergarten through grade 8. Each level comes with all books, supplies, and a detailed guide for the home tutor. It also offers a teacher advisory service to grade papers and guide the home tutor.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Division of Continuing Studies (C), Lincoln, NE 68583 offers a similar correspondence course for secondary students. The success of home study depends greatly on the nature of the student and the quality of the tutor.

Away From Post. Employees with junior- or senior high-aged dependents could also consider boarding schools in the U.S. or Europe. The educational counselor at the Family Liaison Office (Room 1254, Department of State) has information and booklets to aid in choosing an appropriate boarding school. Direct flights to Paris, Frankfurt, Amsterdam, Lisbon, and New York City from Sal Island allow travel to schools in those areas.

There are two English-language schools in Dakar but neither school offers boarding facilities. Boarding must be arranged on a private basis. See the Dakar Post Report for specifics on those schools.

Special Educational Opportunities

Praia has no colleges or universities. Most adult education programs are limited to adult literacy courses. Private tutoring in English would be difficult to obtain. No special schooling exists for handicapped persons.

Post Orientation Program

Praia does not hold a formal post orientation program. Since the U.S. and international communities are small, orientation is informal and social. The Embassy maintains a small collection of books on Cape Verde, including works on history, religion, culture, and geography.

A basic knowledge of Portuguese or French is important to a successful tour in Cape Verde. Spanish speakers have little trouble learning Portuguese. Language instruction is available to employees and dependents at the Embassy.

Recreation and Social Life

Sports

An active tennis and golf club is located in Praia. Membership cost is minimal. However, there is no grass on the golf course and the constant wind adds a challenging dimension to tennis matches. The hotel in Prainha where most Americans live also has a tennis court. Tennis lessons are available and inexpensive.

The national sport of Cape Verde is soccer, and matches are held regularly. Cape Verde also sponsors tennis, handball, and basketball teams. Softball is played on an informal basis, most often when organized by enthusiastic Americans.

Cape Verde offers a wide variety of water sports, such as fishing, sailing, boating, diving, and snorkeling. Wind surfing is also becoming popular.

The Embassy maintains a 32-foot sailboat fully capable of interisland sails as well as day and weekend trips. Santiago has attractive beaches within easy walking distance of the residential area and on other parts of the island reachable by car.

Bring all sports equipment to post.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

The volcanic mountains, valleys, and beaches of Cape Verde are ideal for exploring, hiking, and picnicking. Packs, picnic baskets, coolers, thermos jugs, small charcoal grills, beach umbrellas, and chairs add comfort, ease, and enjoyment to such expeditions.

Travel between the islands provides a change of pace and scenery from Praia. The national airline, TACV, serves the major islands at reasonable prices. Fogo offers interesting landscape dominated by its volcano. On Sao Vicente, the city of Mindelo is more bustling and cosmopolitan than Praia. Each island is unique and provides fine photographic opportunities.

A bi-monthly pouch run to Dakar, Senegal, offers a 3-day trip to diplomatic passport-holding U.S. Government employees. Shopping there is excellent but prices are high. The city has many museums and cultural attractions as well as good beaches and restaurants.

Entertainment

Entertainment in Praia is limited. The city has two cinemas (one outdoor) which often show English-language films with Portuguese subtitles. Brazilian and European films are also shown. The major hotels have adequate restaurants with varied menus, and a downtown hotel is building a loyal clientele for its Sunday noon buffets. Small local restaurants tempt the more adventurous. Several discos of varying quality are located in Praia.

Local competition in vocal and instrumental music is popular as well as in dance. Carnaval (the pre-Lenten festival) is one of the year's major events in Mindelo. State functions are rare.

Fast becoming the most popular form of entertainment is the home video recorder (both Beta and VHS systems). An informal system of swapping tapes exists, but to ensure a steady supply of fresh material, it would be wise to bring recorded tapes with you and establish a supply line with someone in the U.S. As all mail to Cape Verde comes via air pouch, the wait for new material is not too long.

While U.S.-purchased systems are adequate for showing one's own tapes, if buying a new system, it would be wise to investigate a multisystem receiver (NTSC/PAL/SECAM) which would allow a mutual exchange of tapes with members of the European community.

Social Activities

Among Americans. The American community in Praia is quite small, fewer than 12 official Americans. Currently, no organizations are specifically for Americans.

International Contacts. In addition to the Embassy of the U.S., Praia is host to Embassies of France, Portugal, China, the Soviet Union, Cuba, and Brazil. In addition to the multinational UNDP group, more than two dozen FAO experts are in Praia. Language fluency in Portuguese, French, or Spanish is a great asset when mixing with the international community.

There is great interest in learning English and anyone willing to give English lessons could be kept busy and at the same time meet interesting people.

Official Functions

Nature of Functions

Even though the international and American communities are small, social life can be active. Small dinners and lunches are common. Picnics and beach outings are popular. Most functions are casual.

The Cape Verdeans themselves often have limited resources for entertaining, but clearly like to be invited to people's homes. Many opportunities exist to get to know the people, customs, and culture of the host country through both official and casual contacts.

Standards of Social Conduct

It is expected that U.S. Government employees attend official functions and accept and reciprocate personal invitations from Cape Verdean officials. A supply of calling cards is useful for officers and spouses assigned to Praia. Bring cards to post.

Special Information

Personnel coming to Praia are advised to include several changes of clothing in their hand luggage. It is not unusual to arrive in Praia without accompanying baggage. It usually follows within a few days.

It is also wise to arrive at post with a good supply of personal leisure-time activities in hand. Books, music, sports equipment, games, cards, and hobby material are invaluable the first weeks of settling into life in Cape Verde.

Photographers should note that film of all kinds is expensive and often difficult to find here. Only black-and-white film is processed locally and Americans send film to the U.S. for processing.

If you are planning on bringing a home computer to Praia, the advice is to purchase a "surge protector" that will protect your equipment from blowing out in a sudden surge of electrical power. Dust covers are essential.

Lastly, if shipping consumables for the first time, note all household and food items you use most often. For additional information on what is available locally get a copy of the latest Retail Price Survey. It contains an extensive list of consumer items and notes their local availability and price.

Notes For Travelers

Getting to the Post

There are three routes to reach Cape Verde: NYC/Lisbon/Sal/Praia, NYC/Sal/ (direct via South African Airlines) Praia, and NYC/Dakar/Praia. Dakar is to be avoided as the Dakar/Praia flight is difficult and luggage is strictly limited to 20 kilos per person.

Cape Verde's international airport is on Sal Island, a 1-hour flight from Praia via TACV, the internal Cape Verdean airline. Arrangements for the Sal/Praia portion of the ticket must be made in Cape Verde. Early notification of travel plans will help the Embassy to arrange for a reservation to be waiting in Sal.

If arriving via SAA please be advised that TACV does not fly on Sunday and that during the week a wait of 8 hours for the connecting flight to Praia is usual. A good hotel is located in Santa Maria (17 kilometers from the airport), where the wait is more pleasant. One can ride on the SAA crew bus to the hotel and taxi back ($5) for the connecting TACV flight.

Carry sufficient funds to pay any excess baggage fee from Sal to Praia; TACV does not accept U.S. Government bills of lading.

Surface shipments are usually routed via ship from the U.S. to Antwerp and from there to Cape Verde. Shipping time is about 6 months. Air freight shipments may be sent JFK/Lisbon/Sal or JFK/Sal via SAA. Air shipment crates should be limited to 5′ × 5′ in size and 400 pounds in weight. Larger crates will not fit in the aircraft used by TACV. Air shipments take about 6 weeks. Check with your desk officer before you consign your shipments to a packing company. Carefully pack and wrap personal effects in waterproof paper. Mark your name on each case. Do **not** send shipments via Dakar for any reason.

Prior to arrival at post, advise the Embassy what effects you have shipped to Praia. Insure all shipments.

Effects shipped to Praia should be marked as follows:

Full Name
American Embassy
Praia, Cape Verde

Customs, Duties, and Passage

Customs and Duties

Shipments usually clear customs easily. Duty-free entry is extended to all personal effects and automobile shipments, both initial and following. You may also order items from the U.S. for delivery via diplomatic pouch.

Bring five or six passport-sized, black-and-white photographs for each family member for identity cards, visas, etc.

Passage

American citizens require visas for entry into Cape Verde. They can be obtained at the Cape Verdean Embassy in Washington, D.C.

Pets

Quarantine is not required for pets imported to Cape Verde. Inoculate dogs and cats against rabies within 6 months prior to arrival at post. Bring pets to post as excess accompanying baggage to avoid inadequate handling at airports en route.

No pet food is available locally, and a good supply should be shipped with consumables as well as in the air freight shipment.

Several FAO veterinarians and one Cape Verdean are located in Praia. No kennels are available. Dogs, cats, and birds are popular pets.

Firearms and Ammunition

You should not import firearms and ammunition into Cape Verde. If you wish to obtain an exception to this rule, write directly to the Chief of Mission.

Currency, Banking, and Weights and Measures

Employees assigned to Praia are paid biweekly from RAMC, Paris. You can obtain Cape Verdean escudos currently valued at about 90 to the U.S. dollar from the Banco de Cabo Verde. Cape Verdean escudos are not convertible outside Cape Verde.

A U.S. checking account is indispensable. Arrange for pay allotments with a U.S. bank.

The metric system of weights and measures is used in Cape Verde.

Taxes, Exchange, and Sale of Property

Restrictions

The Embassy takes care of car registration and licensing via diplomatic note to the Foreign Ministry. There is no charge. A valid U.S. drivers license is acceptable. All personnel are issued diplomatic identity cards.

Local third-party car insurance is not compulsory but is recommended and averages about $100 a year depending upon the weight of the car.

There are no restrictions on resale of personal property with the exception of cars. A car is assessed a customs tax of 50% of its value if sold while in the country 2 years or less. A car must be in country 3 years or more to be exempt from customs tax. A new consumers tax charged to the buyer tends to make the resale of older, larger American cars difficult as the tax is assessed according to the cubic inches of the car.

Facilities

The Embassy cashier provides accommodation exchange through a local bank and accepts personal and travelers checks as well as cash dollars. Personal checks are most easily handled.

Recommended Reading

These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country. The Department of State does not endorse unofficial publications.

Abshire, David and Michael Samuals, eds. *Portuguese Africa—A Handbook*. Praeger: New York, 1969.

Africa South of the Sahara. Europa Publications: London, 1975.

Cabo Verde. Editions Delroisse: 1978.

Cape Verdean Connection. American Committee for Cape Verde, July 1975.

Carreira, Antonio. *The People of the Cape Verde Islands: Exploitation and Immigration*. Auchn Books: Hamden, CT, 1982.

Chilcote, Ronald H. *Emerging Nationalism in Portuguese Africa—Documents*. Hoover Institution Press: Stanford, CA, 1972.

Duncan, T. Bentley. *Atlantic Islands: Madeira, the Azores, and the Cape Verdes in Seventeenth-Century Commerce and Navigation*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1972.

Report of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Cape Verde. U.N. General Assembly Document A/AC. 109/L.1002. New York, April 17, 1975.

Local Holidays

New Year's Day	January 1
National Heroes' Day	January 20
Women's Day	March 8
Good Friday	Varies
Worker's Day	May 1
Children's Day	June 1
Cape Verde Independence Day	July 5
Day of Nationalism	September 12
Christmas Day	December 25

American housing area in Prainha.

In small gardens like this one, Americans often grow their own vegetables.